



Lois Evelyn (Johnson) Setterholm

November 20, 2017

Lois Evelyn (Johnson) Setterholm:

The words of the hymn “Nearer My God to Thee” still lingered in the air when Lois slipped away from this world on November 20, 2017. It was a calm, quiet evening. She was in her own bed, where she had been surrounded by the love and singing of her family.

”Or, if on joyful wing cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot, upward I’ll fly,
Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to Thee”

Her son Joel opened a window to the mild November air to let her spirit fly free. After a year of struggling to breathe, she finally “slipped the surly bonds of earth to touch the face of God.”

Lois was born on September 15, 1923, to Mildred and George Johnson in Warren, Pennsylvania. The eldest of five children, she grew up surrounded by a loving family, supportive church and community, and the beautiful rolling hills of northwest Pennsylvania. Her stories of childhood were idyllic.

Then came the Depression. Her father lost his business, contracted TB, then died when she was 17. Pearl Harbor happened when she was 18; the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima, Japan, when she was a newlywed of 21. Little did she know that she would soon be living in Japan and that her best friend

Masako Akimoto would be from Hiroshima.

Lois met the love of her life, Paul Setterholm, when she left Warren to study at the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis. They married on July 26, 1945. In 1952, they were called by the Augustana Lutheran Synod to be missionaries to Japan where they focused on building bridges between our cultures and sharing the Good News that sustained them both.

They lived in Japan for most of 24 years, raising 4 children and providing them with a view of the world that few are blessed to experience. In 1995, Lois lost Paul after 50 years of marriage. Despite missing him daily, she learned to drive (at age 73), stayed very active at church, took classes (including Greek!) at Luther Seminary, went to concerts, and enjoyed visiting with her grandchildren. Lois was always curious to get to know strangers. She liked to find the bright side of every situation, and frequently expressed thanks for all her blessings.

Lois leaves behind son Mark of Eugene, OR, son Keith (Tori) of St. Paul, MN, daughter Nan Van Sandt (Steve) of Brownsville, OR, son Joel (Carolyn) of Minneapolis, MN, grandsons Nicholas (Kana) Van Sandt, Noah (Hannah Carey) Setterholm, Anders Van Sandt, and granddaughter Abigail Setterholm. She also leaves siblings Russell, Robert, and Nancy, all of Warren, PA. Her sister Carolyn preceded her in death.

A celebration of Lois' life will take place at Nativity Lutheran Church, 3312 Silver Lake Road, Minneapolis, on January 13, 2018 at 10:30 am, with lunch provided following the service. In lieu of flowers, the family would prefer a donation to Lutheran World Relief. Checks can be made to Nativity Lutheran Church with Lutheran World Relief in the memo section.